



A Monthly Newsletter of the United Methodist Church of Vista

We are called to be an authentic, accessible and inclusive community
in Christ, celebrating and extending God's love into the world.

Pastor's Ponderings

Matthew 25:31-40 is a go-to scripture for me. It is the scripture challenging us to actively and tangibly care for people in need. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, [a] you did it to me." This is a scripture that is not just challenging us to care for the lonely, the lost and the cast-aside, we will be judged by what we do or don't do for other people.

In June 2021, you approved, by a vote of the full membership of the church, the completion of your facility. In truth, this project has been on your heart and in your mind since you finished building the church. This is a huge and significant statement about the vision and mission of this congregation. For years to come, you are planning for ministry in God's name. You are dedicating space to caring for the ones that Matthew's gospel calls us to service.

Ministry is more than space. Walls and floors and windows don't do ministry. A kitchen and a fellowship hall aren't faithful. The heart of ministry is the people who come to the UMC of Vista. If children are to be raised in faith and inspired by God, it will happen because of the leaders who volunteer and the directors and coordinators who will be hired. If neighbors are to be cared for with a meal, a class on scams or a clinic for health, it will happen because of the visionary people who give voice to compassionate, neighborly care. Ministry isn't a book, ministry and service to God is person to person, one by one, one vision at a time.

The building will likely be complete in July or August 2022. (Keep watching our church facebook page for regular pictures of the building progress.). We are months away from having walls and space for more ministry. The question that keeps me up at night is "how will day one represent your vision for service and faithfulness and mission?" On day one of opening and blessing your new space, what will we do to and for the least of God's kingdom?

Our church family is a community partner to all of our neighbors. We are a community partner with our community partners doing good work in our neighborhood. We are a community partner sharing a resource of space, and vision and inspiration and people who cling to the grace of God.

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, [a] you did it to me."

Have you longed to make a difference in the world? Is your heart stirred by God's love? If you are saying "yes" to these questions, exciting times are coming! Even as the church next door to us closes and becomes homes, the vision of our church family is moving God's grace in mission and service and ministry into the future!

Prayerfully,

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

Finance Focus

We are happy to announce that we completed the 2021 Church Budget year by meeting all our “Ministries” financial obligations. Your many generous gifts enabled our church, as a caring and sharing congregation, to spread the good news of God’s love, and the Salvation of Jesus Christ in our community and around the world. The 2022 Church budget will be shared for approval with the Church Council on Saturday, February 5. The amount needed from all sources to complete our ministry goals for the 2022 year is \$592,708.86. So far this year, we have received 79 pledges for 2022 totaling \$232,700, with givers of record totaling \$70,000. With all income sources added we are over \$105,708 short to fund all items in the 2022 budget. If you have not yet made a pledge to support our ministries budget for 2022, you may still do so by filling out your pledge note and mailing it to the Church office or dropping it off in the secure mailbox at the Church office. We have also received several new online giving pledges. If you wish to give online just click on the giving tab on our home page and fill out the necessary information. If you have any questions about our ministry plans or the 2022 budget feel free to contact me by phone or email.

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair,
Lay Leader

Valentine’s Sunday Notes

Jesus said, “Love one another, as I have loved you.” Share YOUR love on Valentine’s Sunday by uploading one picture of your love for a friend, family, pet or place. Be sure to share your name and the name for “your love” with any expression of love you’d like to share. We will share them in worship on Feb 13. Upload your picture or love note by February 6th to videoupload.umcvista.org Contact Michael Beu for more information.

UMW Sunday, February 13

United Methodist Women Sunday is coming up on February 13. We celebrate the women of our church, their passion and work in missions and for women and children around the world. Wherever we are in worship, let us wear red in celebration and appreciation of the UMW!

Happy “February” Birthdays

Sonia Maniti (2)
Suzy Harlow (5)
Robbie Pierce (7)
Gary Lamb (9)
Janice Myers (9)
Gabriel Shute (13)
Julianna Bodnar (14)
Warren “Scot” Spitz (15)
Paul Hernandez (15)
Loretta Pierce (17)
Sarah Klahn (19)
Nicole Burns (21)
Jacque Howard (22)
Mike Walker (22)
Tim Clarke (23)
Tim Smith (23)
Keona Christian (25)
Nadine Kaina (26)
Lyn Berry (27)
Karen Canfield-Marquez (27)

Note: If your birthday is not listed, please call Paula at the church office.

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Next deadline is Wednesday, February 16, 2022
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

The Flame (monthly newsletter)
United Methodist Church of Vista
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Vista, CA 92081

Justice is an issue

"Why didn't Jesus come as a woman?" asked my daughter is an article written by Debie Thomas and is printed in The Christian Century. You can read the full article at <http://www.christiancentury.org> and going to the search.

"Like many people, I grew up with an exclusively male God. While my childhood pastors insisted that God is genderless... such runarounds had zero impact on me as a child and young woman because they ignored the power of language to construct reality. They dismissed the shaping influence of sermons, Bible stories, and hymns in which God was always and only "he." ... This was a God I took into my bones and enthroned in my unconscious.

This gendering of course had real-world consequences.

I didn't know until recently that ruach, the God-Spirit who hovers over the unformed earth in Genesis 1:2, is feminine. I didn't know about Sophia (Prov. 8:22), or God panting in childbirth (Isa. 42:14), or God the ferocious she-bear (Hosea 13:8), or God the midwife (Ps. 22:9-10), or Jesus the mother hen (Matt. 23:37). I'm only now uncovering the imagery and language of recognition, mirroring, and belonging that men in the church take for granted.

But private discoveries are one thing; the public witness of the church is another. Just as my daughter recognized herself in the historic election of America's first female, Black, and Indian-American vice president, I long to recognize myself in the God-language of the church. I yearn to belong directly, not by extension or secondhand. As in: "It's God! She looks like us! She is one of us!"

These days, I pay attention... as progressive churches debate the relative merits of gender-neutral and gender-expansive language. These debates exceed politics and academia; they're inextricably linked to loss and trauma, needs and hungers... I fear that neutrality will never be fierce, loving, robust, hospitable, and generative enough for a God who cried at Lazarus's tomb, washed dusty feet, and received the ardent caresses of the woman who dared to pour perfume over God's head.

Maybe what I'm looking for is a space within church and liturgy to lament, to grieve and rage, to name what has been lost and can't be recovered. I can't get my childhood back. I can't unmake the male God the church formed in me... I need the church to help me, to endorse language that's different from what I was given and to walk with me...

Why was Jesus a man? I don't know. But I wonder if the question would resonate differently, ... if the church would wrap it in language as radically welcoming as my daughter needs. As in: "Sweetheart, we don't know why God didn't send us a daughter. But she is still our wise Mother and our loving Father. He is a God who births only what is beautiful. She is Sofia, the very fountain of wisdom, and we can trust her. Ours is a Mother who knows what she's doing."

-Barbara Mitchell

Zoom Gatherings and Meetings

Zoom meetings are one way we are working on keeping connected. All you need is a computer or smartphone with a built-in microphone and a camera and you can join in. Download the Zoom app to your device, click on "join a meeting" and follow the prompts to join the gathering.

No Host-Drop In Coffee Chat, Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Meeting ID: 613 081 197

SPRC, Feb. 2, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 968 9336 2856

Passcode: 490490

Congregational Care Meeting, Feb. 3, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting ID: 921 7026 9939

Church Council, Feb. 5, 9:00 a.m.

Meeting ID: 959 0726 4821

Education/Discipleship, Feb. 9, 6 p.m.

Meeting ID: 983 3122 0500

Passcode: 490490

Trustees, February 15, 6:30 p.m.

Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986

Passcode: 490490

Reconciling Ministries, Feb. 22, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 995 8164 7395

Passcode: WELCOME

Finance, February 23, 7:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

Heartfelt Thanks

Dear UMC Vista,

Words are inadequate to express our immense gratitude for your support these past years to empower women who are overcoming some of life's biggest challenges!

We appreciate our relationship with many of you who have attended our graduations and events! We look forward to seeing you in person soon!

Leap to Success (Dana, Michele, Kelly)

Thank you to all those who have prayed for my family. Your prayers mean so much.

Margo Rogers

Flowers for Birthdays, Anniversaries and Special Events

Is there someone or something you would like to recognize and celebrate? Let us know WHAT and WHEN you would like “Flowers” and Michael Beu will create a “Flower Slide” just for you. Please click on this link: <http://specialeventslides.umcvista.org/> to fill out a form in order to request the flowers.

Stay connected

E-mail: umcvista@umcvista.org

Website: www.umcvista.org

Facebook: United Methodist Church of Vista

Be sure to check us out on Yelp!

Pray together for...

Jim Rogers, Nancy Winters, Karen Veysada, Louise Clarke, Suzanne McMurchie, Nancy Koski, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Charlotte Chappell, Olive Harris, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Margo and Jim Rogers, Joan Brainerd

Our sympathy is extended to Rae Ann Wirth and family upon the passing of Don on January 28. Don was a beloved member of the Chancel Choir.

Return Service Requested

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